

## National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities

## § 1177.8

who disputes a debt must promptly provide available supporting evidence.

(b) If a debtor is involved in insolvency proceedings, the debt will be referred to the appropriate United States Attorney to file a claim. The United States may have a priority over other creditors under 31 U.S.C. 3713.

### § 1177.6 Notice to debtor.

The first written demand for payment must inform the debtor of the following:

(a) The amount and nature of the debt;

(b) The date payment is due, which will generally be 30 days from the date the notice was mailed;

(c) The assessment of interest under § 1177.7 from the date the notice was mailed if payment is not received within the 30 days;

(d) The right to dispute the debt;

(e) The office, address and telephone number that the debtor should contact to discuss repayment and reconsideration of the debt and;

(f) The sanctions available to the National Endowment for the Humanities to collect a delinquent debt including, but not limited to, referral of the debt to a credit reporting agency, a private collection bureau, or the Department of Justice for litigation.

### § 1177.7 Interest, penalties, and administrative costs.

(a) Interest will accrue on all debts from the date when the first notice of the debt and the interest requirement is mailed to the last known address or hand-delivered to the debtor if the debt is not paid within 30 days from the date the first notice was mailed. The Endowment will charge an annual rate of interest that is equal to the average investment rate for the Treasury tax and loan accounts on September 30 of each year, rounded to the nearest whole per centum. This rate, which represents the current value of funds to the United States Treasury, may be revised quarterly by the Secretary of the Treasury and is published by the Secretary of the Treasury annually or quarterly in the FEDERAL REGISTER and the Treasury Financial Manual Bulletins.

(b) The rate of interest initially assessed will remain fixed for the duration of the indebtedness, except that if a debtor defaults on a repayment agreement interest may be set at the Treasury rate in effect on the date a new agreement is executed.

(c) The Endowment shall charge debtors for administrative costs incurred in handling overdue debts.

(d) Interest will not be charged on administrative costs.

(e) The Endowment shall assess a penalty charge, not to exceed 6 per cent per year on debts which have been delinquent for more than 90 days. This charge shall accrue from the date that the debt became delinquent.

(f) The Chairperson or his designee may waive in whole or in part the collection of interest and administrative and penalty charges if determined that collection would be against equity or not in the best interests of the United States. The Endowment shall waive the collection of interest on the debt or any part of the debt which is paid within 30 days after the date on which interest began to accrue.

### § 1177.8 Administrative offset.

(a) The Endowment may collect debts owed by administrative offset if:

(1) The debt is certain in amount;

(2) Efforts to obtain direct payment have been, or would most likely be unsuccessful, or the Endowment and the debtor agree to the offset;

(3) Offset is cost effective or has significant deterrent value; and

(4) Offset is best suited to further and protect the Government's interest.

(b) The Endowment may offset a debt owed to another Federal agency from amounts due or payable by the Endowment to the debtor or request another Federal agency to offset a debt owed to the Endowment;

(c) Prior to initiating administrative offset, the National Endowment for the Humanities will send the debtor written notice of the following:

(1) The nature and amount of the debt and the agency's intention to collect the debt by offset 30 days from the date the notice was mailed if neither payment nor a satisfactory response is received by that date;

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(2) The debtor's right to an opportunity to submit a good faith alternative repayment schedule to inspect and copy agency records pertaining to the debt, to request a review of the determination of indebtedness; and to enter into a written agreement to repay the debt and;

(3) The applicable interest.

(d) The National Endowment for the Humanities may effect an administrative offset against a payment to be made to a debtor prior to the completion of the procedures required by paragraph (c) of this section if:

(1) Failure to offset would substantially prejudice the Government's ability to collect the debt and

(2) The time before the payment is to be made does not reasonably permit completion of those procedures.

### § 1177.9 Use of credit reporting agencies.

(a) The Endowment may report delinquent accounts to credit reporting agencies consistent with the notice requirements contained in the § 1177.6 of this part. Individual debtors must be given at least 60 days written notice that the debt is overdue and will be reported to a credit reporting agency.

(b) Debts may be reported to consumer or commercial reporting agencies. Consumer reporting agencies are defined in 31 U.S.C. 3701(a)(3) pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552a(b)(12) and 31 U.S.C. 3711(f). The Endowment may disclose only an individual's name, address, social security number, and the nature, amount, status and history of the debt and the program under which the claim arose.

### § 1177.10 Collection services.

(a) The Endowment may contract for collection services to recover outstanding debts. The Endowment may refer delinquent debts to private collection agencies listed on the schedule compiled by the General Services Administration. In such contracts, the National Endowment for the Humanities will retain the authority to resolve disputes, compromise claims, terminate or suspend collection, and refer the matter to the Department of Justice or the General Accounting Office.

(b) The contractor shall be subject to the disclosure provisions of the Privacy Act of 1974, as amended (5 U.S.C. 552a(m)), and to applicable federal and state laws and regulations pertaining to debt collection practices, including the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, 15 U.S.C. 1692. The contractor shall be strictly accountable for all amounts collected.

(c) The contractor shall be required to provide to the Endowment any data contained in its files relating to the debt account upon agency request or upon returning an account to the Endowment for referral to the Department of Justice for litigation.

### § 1177.11 Referral to the Department of Justice or the General Accounting Office.

Debts over \$600 but less than \$100,000 which the Endowment determines can neither be collected nor otherwise disposed of will be referred for litigation to the United States Attorney in whose judicial district the debtor is located. Claims for amounts exceeding \$100,000 shall be referred for litigation to the Commercial Litigation Branch, Civil Division of the Department of Justice.

### § 1177.12 Compromise, suspension and termination.

(a) The Chairperson of the National Endowment for the Humanities or his designee may compromise, suspend or terminate the collection of debts where the outstanding principal is not greater than \$20,000. Endowment procedures for writing off outstanding accounts are available to the public.

(b) The Chairperson of the National Endowment for the Humanities may compromise, suspend or terminate collection of debts where the outstanding principal is greater than \$20,000 only with the approval of, or by referral to the United States Attorney or the Department of Justice.

(c) The Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities will refer to the General Accounting Office (GAO) debts arising from GAO audit exceptions.